

Strategic Initiative for Certified Schools

6/29/2018 Meeting Summary

Meeting Participants:

Eric Adams, Grand River Welding Institute
Lute Atieh, American Business & Technology University
Anita Barker, International Institute of Metro St. Louis
Jennifer Bussen, Chamberlain University
Courtney Green, BKA Medical Training Center
Tyson Heath, Western Governor's University - Missouri
Jamie Jadow, Concorde Career College
Tona Leiker, Chamberlain University
Linda Lynch, W.T.I. – Joplin
Cindy Marten, St. Louis College of Health Careers
Joan Meyer, National American University
Heather Nickel, Concorde Career College
Robin O'Connell, Wellspring School of Allied Health
Ted Parker, Centriq Training
Nikhil Patel, New Horizons of St. Louis
Jennifer Steinmetz, Dogwood Dental Assisting School
Jeanetta Stomer, Aspire Healthcare Solutions
Tamara Taylor, Aspire Healthcare Solutions
Emily Witt, St. Louis School of Phlebotomy
Terrie Yardley-Nohr, The Healing Arts Center

Missouri Department of Higher Education (MDHE) Staff:

Jaron Vail
Laura Vedenhaupt
Leroy Wade
Leslie Winter

Mr. Wade provided background on the department's strategic plan *Preparing Missourians to Succeed: A Blueprint for Higher Education*. Information was also shared about the process used by MDHE staff to identify Goal 3: Quality, under which certified schools may be most visible.

Participants were organized into small breakout groups facilitated by an MDHE staff member. The morning session focused discussion on the following questions:

- 1) What are the strengths and weaknesses (pros/cons) related to the MDHE establishing a program quality initiative?**

Strengths / Pros

- An MDHE sponsored initiative would help set a quantitative standard for schools to meet or surpass
- Schools may strive to have programs included on the list

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- Clarifies “quality”
- Allows opportunity for all schools to participate
- Focus on measurable outcomes
- Offers additional consumer information and protection
- Transparency of process
- Voluntary participation
- Unify the sector
- Providing MDHE certified schools with a voice
- Offering credibility / legitimacy to sector schools
- Positive publicity and recognition for schools
- Increase public awareness/visibility of MDHE certified schools
- Data is independently reviewed

Weaknesses / Cons

- Data used as indicators may vary based on reporting periods (12-months, 18-months), and annual vs. fiscal year collection
- Lack of consistency across types of institutions and programs making it difficult to compare program outcomes
- Lack of consistency of data collection
- Potential negative impact if a school does not meet thresholds or chooses not to participate
- Challenging to meet criteria
- Lack of specific terminology/definitions of quality and other key concepts
- Unclear if allowances are made for unique program delivery methodologies
- Potential to become too exclusive
- Unhealthy competition
- Increased burden on schools
- If the initiative fails, may present a risk to the sector
- It's new and therefore may be in for additional scrutiny

2) How should we address / overcome the weaknesses/cons?

- Clear definitions to ensure programs are fairly and impartially evaluated
- Working group work within your institution and with other schools to establish buy-in
- Use currently available/published objective data
- Limit to programs with occupational licensure or program/areas with external regulators or associations, at least initially
- Consider categorizing programs by delivery methodology

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3) Are the objectives noted by MDHE staff (student information resource, recognition of quality programming, dissemination of best practices) appropriate to the task? What other objectives should be considered?

- Objectives are appropriate but require clear definitions
- Credibility and reputation of not only the sector but also other education modalities
- Recognition and awareness by the public of other options
- Consider the intended audience for this information (Students? Parents? General public? Other schools?)
- Consider focusing on skills / skill sets rather than program titles or CIP Codes
- Recognizing schools achieving above industry standards
- Coordination and cooperation between and among schools and the community

4) Goal 3 of the *Blueprint* relates to high quality – and relevant – education. What are indicators of program quality? Of relevancy?

- Licensure/certification pass rates
- # of times licensure/certification exams taken before passing
- Differentiate between mandatory licensure/certification exams for employment and optional exams chosen to enhance credentials/employability
- Retention rates
- Graduation rates
- Time to completion
- Employment / placement rates
- Student satisfaction
- Employer satisfaction
- Instructor quality
- Transferability of credits
- Career services
- Student to instructor ratio
- Third party verifications
- School size
- Financial stability

5) Are data for those indicators available and/or attainable? If not yet available or attainable, could they be? How?

- Consider different levels of recognition (meets quality criteria, exceeds quality criteria)
- Check with other states about data for indicators – how are they collecting?
- Check with funding agencies on data they require for continued participation
- Accredited institutions offer guidance to unaccredited on data collection

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The afternoon breakout session focused on the following questions:

1) Given the morning conversation relating to indicators and data, what program areas and/or types should be included in the first version of this project?

- Focus on programs with most data available
- Focus on programs with established benchmarks in the field (i.e., LPN, RN)
- Focus on most popular programs
- Licensure programs and programs with national licensure/certification
- Healthcare and trade programs such as HVAC

2) What criteria regarding the school as a whole should be considered as gatekeepers?

- Number and type of students served
- Formal complaints filed with the MDHE
- Accreditor issues
- Financial stability
- Program established for a certain number of years
- Diversity
- School must have completed at least one full recertification cycle with MDHE

3) How should the different criteria be incorporated into the process? Pass/Fail? Point system? Weighting? Other?

- Use metrics / rubrics over simple yes/no on quality criteria
- Consider how cohort size may impact criteria
- Some evaluation criteria may change based on program

4) The current plan is to establish a smaller working group to develop a more detailed proposal for implementation. How should that working group be composed?

- Have two committees – one for licensure and one for non-licensure programs
- At least six, but have an odd number to avoid tie votes
- Include employer/public members
- Geographic distribution
- Include diverse cross section of schools (accredited and non-accredited, various missions and program focus)
- No more than one representative per school